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ABSTRACT

The growing number of value clarification curriculum materials is an indication that moral education is becoming a major focal point of curriculum. This study looks at one social studies course that includes both a moral development component and an inquiry approach. The hypotheses of the study are that students will show significant growth in (1) social studies facts and principles, (2) learning and inquiry skills, (3) attitudes toward social studies, and (4) self esteem and moral judgment. The sample consists of students from six suburban Boston school districts between the eighth and tenth grade who had previously been exposed to materials developed by Ted Fenton. The dependent variables are pre- and posttestings on attitude toward self and self as a learner, social studies, politics, knowledge, learning, inquiry skills, and moral judgement level. Although no real significant differences in the areas are observed in absolute individual gains, as a group the total sample did increase their scores on the inquiry Skills and Knowledge subtests and change their attitudes slightly in two areas. In the moral judgement level, it makes no difference whether teachers attended a five-day workshop on Kohlberg's theory or read a manual discussing the same material. It was found, however, that growth in moral reasoning is more likely to occur where a range of reasoning is present and expressed in an active classroom discussion, especially when teachers take an active rather than a parliamentarian role. (Author/JR)

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Evaluation of a Social Studies Curriculum Based On an Inquiry Method and A Cognitive-Developmental Approach to Moral Education

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Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Washington, D.C., April, 1975.

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The author wishes to express gratitude to a number of individuals who participated in this study including, Lawrence Kohlberg, Edwin Fenton, Anne Colby and Betsy Speicher-Dubin. Support for the project came from the W. Clemont and Jessie V. Stone Foundation and the Spencer Foundation. Finally I would like to express my appreciation to the teachers whose perceptions and enthusiasm were an integral component of the research.

The rapidly increasing number of value clarification curriculum materials and the growing interest in applying moral development theory in educational practice are strong evidence that moral education is rapidly becoming part of the "real" curriculum rather than the "hidden" curriculum in our nation's schools. Often, these programs are conducted in social studies classes where students are introduced to and discuss what seem to be bizarre practices of other cultures or are exposed to the similarly bizarre activities of some of our elected officials. This study is the first look at one social studies course that included both a moral development component and an inquiry approach.

For the past fifteen years, Lawrence Kohlberg and his associates have been studying moral judgment in the United States and other countries. Their research (Kohlberg, 1969) has shown strong evidence of the existence of a six stage progression which describes sequential moral development. The lowest, or preconventional level, of the scale has two stages in which moral choice and moral reasoning are based on physical (Stage 1) or instrumental hedonistic (Stage 2) consequences of action. At the middle, or conventional level of the scale, moral reasoning is based on the expectations of others (Stage 3) or on upholding the given social order (Stage 4). At the highest, or post-conventional level, people reason in terms of a consideration of social welfare and the social contract (Stage 5) or universal ethical principles (Stage 6).

The research of Kohlberg and his colleagues indicates that people move through these stages in an invariant sequence beginning early in life at Stage 1. Most people never reach the highest stages, but school children do move up the scale more rapidly if they participate in discussions of moral dilemmas using materials being developed by the Kohlberg group and are guided by trained teachers. Moverover, according to the findings of follow-up interviews, children maintain this advance, compared to control group children (Lieberman and Selman, 1974; Blatt, unpublished).

The social studies component of our curriculum is derived from the work of Edwin Fenton and his associates (e.g., Fenton, Penna and Schultz, 1973). The overall goal of their work is to provide experiences that help each student to develop to the limit of his ability into an independent thinker and an informed, responsible citizen of a democratic society. They divided this general goal into four subdivisions; attitudes, values, inquiry skills and knowledge. They are continuing to develop teaching strategies which would instill in students attitudes such as willingness to cooperate with others, willingness to listen to many sides of an argument, and the desire to rely on scientific findings rather than some other test for truth. Without determining in advance what values children should hold, they raised value questions to challenge students to clarify their judgments about basic value dilemmas such as the nature of the good person, the good life, and the good society.

It should be obvious that the work of Kohlberg and Fenton can be combined in a meaningful learning program, for by providing the rich experiences

in the classroom that the social studies component brings with the cognitive-developmental approach to education that Kohlberg espouses, growth in the above mentioned areas is surely expected and is the result sought in this study.

Hypotheses

There are six major hypotheses in this study:

1. Students will show significant growth in knowledge of social studies facts and principles.
2. Students will show significant growth in learning and inquiry skills.
3. Students will show significant growth in positive attitudes toward themselves as learners and as citizens.
4. Students will show significant growth in positive attitudes toward social studies as a school subject and toward the national political process.
5. There will be no difference in students growth in moral development between teachers who have had an intensive workshop experience in Kohlberg's theory and those who have received written materials describing its nature.
6. There will be a significant difference in the growth of students' moral development between classes which conducted no moral discussions and those which held several such discussions over the course of the school year. In addition, the classes with the most number of discussions would grow the most.

The Sample

Classes from six suburban Boston school districts between the eigth and tenth grades were selected on the basis that teachers in those districts had already been using earlier versions of Fenton's social studies materials. Teachers who had more than one section of social studies for the entire school year were invited to participate, for their situation allowed both an experimental and a control group and thus eliminated the all too often present teacher effect. In all, twelve teachers with a minimum of two classes averaging twenty-five students per class comprised the total sample of the study.

Design of the Stud

The design is a two-way analysis of variance with two levels in one factor, teacher training, and three levels in the second factor, number of discussions conducted. This plan is represented diagrammatically in Table 1.

	0 Dilemmas	12 Dilemmas	24 Dilemmas
Workshop Trained			
Manual Trained			

Table 1. Two Way Design, Training by Number of Discussions

The dependent variables are pre and post testings on the following variables; (1) attitude toward self (2) attitude towards self as learner (3) attitude towards social studies (4) attitude toward politics (5) knowledge (6) learning and inquiry skills (7) moral judgment level.

The instruments include a forty item attitude test divided into four sections each with ten statements to which students may choose to strongly agree, moderately agree, have no opinion, moderately disagree or strongly disagree. A multiple choice achievement test divided into two parts presented items generated from objectives in the Fenton materials related to the two areas of knowledge and learning plus inquiry skills. An assessment of moral judgment level was obtained by Kohlberg's standard interview form, scored blind by trained raters with the stage score converted to a moral maturity score ranging from 100 to 600 representing each level of the Kohlberg theory. Interater reliability on a random sample of twenty-five interviews taken in this study was 0.93. Kuder-Richardson Formula 20 applied to the two equivalent forms of the 30 item knowledge and inquiry skills tests resulted in coefficients of 0.754 and 0.750. Since the test was designed to measure a number of distinct objectives all considered inquiry skills, it was felt that this represented an adequate level of internal consistency. Unfortunately, no pilot item analysis were done.

The Treatment

The Social Studies curriculum advocated by Fenton is well known by teachers and administrators and has been described in volumes much more carefully than can be discussed in a research paper. However, the model can be summarized in a few statements. The range of objectives requires

a range of teaching strategies from pure exposition in the form of short lectures or recitation questions to pure discovery exercises, primarily used to evaluate students' progress. Directed discussion encourages the simultaneous pursuit of multiple objectives such as the development of attitudes toward learning, the growth of inquiry skills and the acquisition of knowledge. A wide variety of materials is employed, including texts containing expository essays and excerpts from sources or secondary accounts of historical events. Audio-visual components allow for extensive use of tranparencies, filmstrips, recordings and simulations.

The contribution which Kohlberg and his associates have made to this curriculum has been to help design moral dilemmas and a classroom discussion technique that makes students more aware of moral issues in the past and in the present and helps them to formulate more clearly their own reasoning in dealing with them. The dilemmas written for the course reflected the content of the material currently being discussed in the social studies materials. However, it was not long before current events, both on the political scene (e.g., Watergate) and in the school itself offered "natural" dilemmas with which to grapple.

The technique of "moral discussion" begins with the students hearing or reading the dilemmas and clarifying the meaning of any words or terms which some students may not understand. Then the students are asked to state their positions in terms of what the major protagonist in the dilemma should do. If a near unanimous feeling is present on one side or another, the teacher usually interjects some element into the dilemma which causes a more even split, or uses an alternative dilemma. The split in choice is a

convenient vehicle to discuss different levels of reasoning and it is here that the third stage of moral discussion takes place. Students examine, analyze and compare their own reasons with reasons offered by other students, while the teacher keeps the focus of the discussion on the reasoning rather than the protagonist's choice. Probe questions provided in the lesson plan help students to examine their reasoning in a variety of circumstances. These probes may include any of the following types; clarifying, issue-specific, inter-issue, one-stage higher and role-switching. Finally, the teacher helps students to summarize the reasoning discussed during the class period. Here students are encouraged to affirm their original position using more adequate reasoning, or adopt a new position based on reasons presented in the class discussion.[1]

Classroom observations were conducted by the project staff to ensure that the format for moral discussion was faithfully adhered to. In fact, this procedure became an evolutionary one, in that effective techniques were constantly discovered by the teachers throughout the year and communi-

Data Analysis

The scores for the four attitude sub-tests can range from 0 to 5 representing an average item score for the ten items on each subtest. Zero represents a strong negative attitude and five, a strong positive one.

Scores on the inquiry test range from 0 to 20 items correct and the knowledge test scores reflect performance on the 10 items presented in that instrument.

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[1] A mimeographed document Developing Moral Dilemmas for Social Studies Classes is presently in draft form and may possibly be obtained by writing to Edwin Fenton at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

The moral judgment scores are quantified to a scale ranging from 100 to 600 where the exact hundreds represent pure stage reasoning and scores between the hundreds represent a variety of transitional reasoning.

It should also be mentioned that only three of the teachers in the study were actually able to participate in the workshop held the summer before classes began in the Fall of 1973. Then a variety of schedule conflicts and changes caused us to "lose" some of the students in course schedule changes and neither of the workshop teachers taught an intermediate number of dilemmas.

It was not expected that the number of dilemmas would necessarily enhance knowledge and inquiry skills so only pre and post differences were computed and examined.

Results

Since only 118 of the nearly 300 students completed both the pre and post tests on the Knowledge and Inquiry Skills instrument, both the repeated measures and the independent groups tests will be reported. The means, standard deviations, t's and significance levels are given in Tables 2A and 2B.

	Mean	Standard Deviations	n	
Pre	12.39	3.36	118	t = 5.10 p<.001
Post	13.96	3.05	118	

Pre	12.56	3.24	246	t = 3.26 p<.001
Post	13.61	3.40	188	

Table 2A. Results of repeated measures and independent groups pre and post test scores on Learning and Inquiry Skills

	Mean	Standard Deviations	n	
Pre	5.09	1.80	118	t = 7.12 p <.001
Post	6.47	1.81	118	
Pre	5.11	1.80	246	t = 4.61 p <.001
Post	6.00	2.14	188	

Table 2B. Results of repeated measures and independent groups' pre and post test scores on Knowledge of Facts.

Only 124 of the students completed both the pre and post-testings on the four attitude surveys, so here too both the repeated measures and independent group results are presented in Table 3A through 3D.

	Mean	Standard Deviations	n	
Pre	3.57	.443	124	t = -2. 4 p =.016
Post	3.47	.518	124	
Pre	3.58	.569	245	t = -1.94 p =.053
Post	3.48	.503	187	

Table 3A. Results of repeated measures and independent groups' pre and post test scores on Attitudes Toward Self

	Mean	Standard Deviations	n	
Pre	3.44	.447	124	t = 0.64 p = .524
Post	3.47	.595	124	
Pre	3.45	.609	245	t = 1.00 p = .318
Post	3.51	.585	187	

Table 3B. Results of repeated measures and independent groups' pre and post test scores on Attitudes Toward Self as Learner.

	Mean	Standard Deviations	n	
Pre	3.07	.632	124	t = 1.65 p = .103
Post	3.15	.681	124	
Pre	3.03	.715	245	t = 1.77 p = .078
Post	3.15	.737	187	

Table 3C. Results of repeated measures and independent groups' pre and post test scores on Attitudes Toward Social Studies.

	Mean	Standard Deviations	n	
Pre	3.87	.408	124	t = 3.77 p<.001
Post	4.01	.402	124	
Pre	3.82	.585	245	t = 2.97 p =.003
Post	3.97	.434	187	

Table 3D. Resulsts of repeated measures and independent groups' pre and post test scores on Attitudes Toward Politics.

Pretest and postest means in moral maturity scores are presented in Tables 4 and 5. Standard deviations are given in parentheses.

	0 Dilemmas	8-12 Dilemmas	24 Dilemmas
Workshop Trained	227.3 (27.6)		210.2 (35.5)
Manual Trained	246.7 (29.9)	240.1 (34.6)	243.1 (30.7)

Table 4. Pretest Means For Moral Maturity Scores

	0 Dilemmas	8-12 Dilemmas	24 Dilemmas
Workshop Trained	226.3 (35.2)		226.8 (24.8)
Manual Trained	237.1 (43.2)	253.7 (39.9)	253.9 (38.2)

Table 5. Postest Means for Moral Maturity Scores

Two two-way analyses of covariance were performed on the data, since post-test scores were significantly correlated with pretest scores ($r=.46$) and gains were also correlated with pretest scores ($r=-.40$).

In both analyses, the number of dilemmas effect was split into two orthogonal (Helmert) planned comparisons; no dilemmas vs. dilemmas and some dilemmas vs. many dilemmas.

The results are summarized in Tables 6 and 7.

Effect	F	P
Training	2.17	0.142
Control vs. Dilemmas	13.61	<0.001
Some vs. Many Dilemmas	0.30	0.585
Interaction	0.54	0.461

Table 6. Summary of Analysis of Covariance of Postest Adjusted for Pretest Scores

Effect	F	P
Grand Mean (Time)	52.36	<0.001
Training	2.17	0.142
Control vs. Dilemmas	13.61	<0.001
Some vs. Many Dilemmas	0.30	0.585
Interaction	0.54	0.461

Table 7. Summary of Analysis of Covariance of Gains Adjusted for Pretest Scores.

Discussion

The above resuts represent a first look at the data from the study and much subsequent analysis needs to be done. However, several conclusions may be drawn at this time and are discussed below.

As a group, the total sample did increase their scores on the Inquiry Skills and Knowledge subtests at a statistically significant level but absolute gains only amounted to one additional correct item on the postest means. The students did better than expected on the pretest and it is probable that a ceiling effect may have had some influence on the scores. Future item anlayses will indicate where growth, if any, took place.

The total sample changed its attitudes slightly in two areas between the pre and post testing. Attitudes Toward Self scores decreased significantly, but this decrease was only 0.1 on the five point scale. From a practical level, there was no change. Attitudes Toward Politics increased significantly, but here too, the change was only 0.15 and could not be considered practically significant.

Finally, let us consider the change in moral judgment level. It made no difference whether teachers attended a five-day workshop on Kohlberg's theory and classroom techniques in moral discussion or read a manual discussing the same material. There was a significant difference in moral maturity scores between classes which did not have moral discussions and classes which did, but no difference between having 8-12 discussions during the year or conducting 24 discussion. The differences were statistically significant, but only represented a gain of thirteen to sixteen moral maturity points.

When the teachers were considered individually we found some classrooms increasing their scores by more than 30 points (equivalent to a third of a stage). Upon closer examination, these classes were discovered to have the highest pretest standard deviations. This result confirmed our suspicions that growth in moral reasoning was more likely to occur where a range of reasoning was present and expressed in an active classroom discussion. An interview with the teachers showed that the greatest growth had taken place when the teacher took an active role in the discussion, probing and pitting one reason against another rather than playing the role of a parliamentorian.

Conclusions

The results of this study, while not definitive, are encouraging. The evolutionary nature of the classroom discussion technique was accomplished by the research associates communicating successful and unsuccessful methods among the teachers. Unfortunately, it is impossible to evaluate the effects of the "technique" for it changed throughout the course of the project.

Other activities are now in progress in classes from 6th grade through high school. Preliminary data reveals one third to one-half a stage increase in most cases. The classes include English and Health as well as Social Studies.

Acceptance of this approach is largely due to its non-indoctrinative nature and its concentration on reasons for valuing rather than merely clarifying the values children possess. The materials presently being produced by Kohlberg and Fenton will allow teachers to write their own dilemmas and conduct moral discussions in a variety of subjects and at a range of age or grade levels. The possibilities of this approach are unlimited and are sure to include an increased awareness by the student of effective means of dealing with the moral issues in his world.

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